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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000590

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREF](#) [CU](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC: REVIEW FOR WAIVER OF TITLE III OF
THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. STATE 65523

[1](#)B. 06 PRAGUE 1488

Classified By: Pol-Econ Counselor Mike Dodman for Reasons 1.4 B&D

[1](#)1. (U) The Czech Republic has actively advocated for democracy and human rights in Cuba since its own transition from a totalitarian regime in 1989. Former Czech President Vaclav Havel, an internationally recognized human rights activist, established the Czech government's principled approach to Cuba during his administration. Subsequent Czech political leaders have continued his policy of supporting the peaceful democratic dissident movement in Cuba, and calling for the release of all political prisoners. The MFA's Transition Cooperation Unit (TRANS) provides financial support to Czech NGOs such as People in Need, who provide humanitarian aid, capacity training, and other support for dissidents and their families and for journalists in Cuba.

[1](#)2. (C) Since joining the EU in 2004, the Czech Republic has advocated for a tougher common policy on Cuba. In the run-up to the June 2007 GAERC meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers, the Czech Republic appears to be the only EU country calling for the reinstatement of the EU "June Measures" that restrict contacts between EU members and the Cuban regime, regardless of whether the June Measures are formally abolished, Czech policy will not change. The Czech Republic will continue to eschew contacts with the Castro regime, actively support dissidents, and condemn Cuban human rights violations within the UN and the EU. The Czech Republic does not recognize Raul Castro as the legitimate successor to Fidel Castro.

[1](#)3. (U) The Czech Republic does not have any foreign investments in Cuba. As an EU member state, the GOCR does not have any bilateral trade agreements, including with Cuba. There are, however, no trade restriction on private companies that want to do business in Cuba. According to the Ministry of Industry Trade (MPO), private trade between the two nations is on the rise. MPO U.S. Desk Officer Vaclav Maly reported that trade with Cuba increased from US\$4 million in 2002 to US\$34 million in 2006. While a sharp increase, the 2006 number is still comparatively small, as Cuba is the Czech Republic's 80th largest trade partner. There are no student exchange programs.
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